

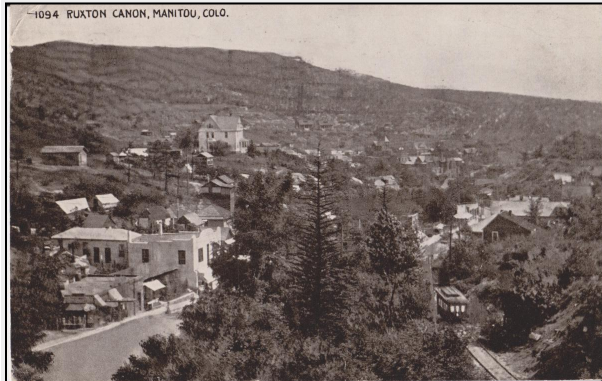
Plan Manitou: An Approach to Integrate Natural Hazard Risk Reduction and Community Development



Background

Manitou Springs is a community of approximately 5400 residents in the Pikes Peak foothills adjacent the City of Colorado Springs. In 2012, the Waldo Canyon fire caused severe damage to a contributing watershed, leading to severe flood events in summer 2013. The City's historic structures and tourist economy add to the City's vulnerability.

As City leaders charted a path to recovery, they concluded they needed a clearer vision for the City's future that addressed hazard risk.



Planning Approach

Manitou Springs is a highly engaged community, with multiple boards and commissions and many other groups that contribute to community development. In 2012, the City adopted a citizen-driven vision plan. The upcoming comprehensive plan would need to engage community partners and clarify why a more comprehensive plan was required. The City received project funding through the Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program administered by the State of Colorado Department of Local Affairs.

City Planning staff managed Plan Manitou with support from Clarion Associates as lead consultant and Acclivity Associates as hazard mitigation specialist. Community engagement included five community meetings; stakeholder meetings; outreach at community events; and email and social media communications. The team decided to build on the goals from the 2012 vision plan and refine them based on community feedback. A Citizens Advisory Committee helped guide the process. A Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) Team guided the HMP, which included a hazard risk and vulnerability assessment and mitigation strategy.

The team decided to create a separate hazard mitigation plan, and incorporate hazard goals, policies, actions and objectives in the comprehensive plan. For instance, the Land Use Element includes policies to address development in high hazard risk areas, and the Transportation Element includes a policy to discourage infrastructure that would promote growth in those areas. The Future Land Use Plan provides hazard risk reduction and mitigation guidance.

The plan incorporates a clear implementation plan, with a short-term implementation component, as well as a long-term plan. Existing community groups will assume a key role in implementation.



A Useful Approach for Communities with High Hazard

Risks

For communities with high natural hazard risk, a comprehensive plan approach can address all aspects of hazard risk planning and community development in a holistic manner. The comprehensive planning process brings together diverse community goals in land use, housing, economic development, natural resources, and other areas. When the

planning process integrates hazard findings, the community has an opportunity to craft goals and policies to reduce hazard risk, while factoring in other community needs. The plan may also facilitate mitigation approaches and opportunities.

A community that is considering this approach will need data that characterizes their hazard risk. The data can come from an existing local or county HMP, or a hazard risk assessment that is not a FEMA-approved plan. It is also helpful to include hazard mitigation experts in the project team.

To learn more please visit: www.planmanitou.com, or contact Manitou Springs' staff at: planmanitou@comsgov.com.